

The American Teacher

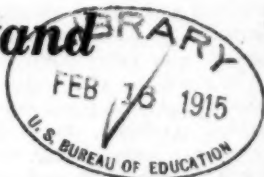
Democracy in Education; Education for Democracy.

VOL. IV No. 2

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY, 1915

50 CENTS A YEAR

Take Your Stand



We shall be called upon to take our stand.

Where then shall we stand?

*For Growing Children, or
for academic standards?*

*For the Spirit of Youth, or
for schedules and examinations?*

*For Human Beings, or
for machines and equipments?*

*For Men and Women, or
for persons and institutions?*

Let us Stand Up and be Counted!

EDUCATIONAL DEMOCRACY

NATHAN PEYSER, Ph.D.,

Principal, P S 39, Manhattan, New York

SO LONG AS school is looked upon as a place where children are taught a definite amount of arithmetic, geography, spelling and grammar only; so long as principals and teachers regard their sole function to be that of teaching the Course of Study, while they fix their attention upon subjects and subject matter and not upon children, their strengths and weaknesses, their ideals and their needs, their past, their present and their future, their life in school and out of school, so long will education be a failure and educational democracy an impossibility.

The child is a vital unity of needs, inheritance, growth possibilities, mentality, physical condition, moral fibre and development, home living, food, friends, church, street, gang and school experiences, sex demands, music, play, love, neglect, happiness and sorrow. To neglect all these and to limit one's observation to methods and results in the so-called school studies is to see a "school child" and not the real child. Attempts to teach him mean an effort to develop but one side of him. The restricting of attention to the curriculum and the ignoring of real life means working blindly without the guidance of life interests and life needs.

Education for a democratic life, in a democratic community and in a democratic school environment, can be accomplished only if every child is given that which will enable him to realize whatever it is for which he is best fitted. The school must seek the child's whole happiness, must mould his whole environment, in school and out of school, twenty-four hours per day, giving him that which has been denied him, extirpating that which is weighing upon him like a dead weight, and freeing his soul and his spirit, so far as possible, from the burdens and fetters of economic, social, moral and physical degradation.

Education is more than a mere school activity. It is a social activity. It must

know and influence the home, the street, the body, the mind, the hand, the eyes, the ears, the brain, the stomach of the child. Every boy and every girl must be treated as an individual, with a definite kind of mind and body, with a peculiar sort of home, with moral, mental, economic and vocational strengths and weaknesses, with a neighborhood with which he interacts negatively or positively, with friends whom he leads and who lead him in good or in bad directions, with church, club, street and gang affiliations.

The home must be known and worked with and into, the neighborhood must be studied and coöperated with or changed, companions must be understood and selected and guided, health must be looked after, mental type and strength or deficiency taken into consideration, social and vocational possibilities recognized, awakened, guided and developed. What is the value of teachers' initiative, of teacher participation in school government, if all that this means is permission to make suggestion in petty matters of school routine? Only when education includes all the elements mentioned above, is guided by this point of view, and interprets arithmetic, geography, history, etc., according to the big human social and vocational life of the child, can education be said to be really efficient and democratic. Only then can teachers be given the opportunities for freedom, for initiative, for the giving of the best that is in them, and for getting out of the work the best that is in it.

Many efforts have been made to realize this goal, various experiments have been tried. The following account describes more than an experiment, because it represents activities arising out of the larger outlook on education, because it has sprung, as it seems, inevitably out of the spirit and labor of the teaching group of Public School 39 B., Manhattan.

On October 3, 1914, all the teachers

of 39 met and organized themselves into the Child's Welfare League of P. S. 39 in order to assist the principal in the broader social and educational activity, in giving to the children as much as possible of what will make life and happiness and character possible to them.

After serious thinking, the following organization was suggested for the league and adopted unanimously by the teachers. The chairman appointed a committee consisting of seven members, each of whom was to be a chairman of a sub-committee. The seven sub-committees are those on

Music, drama, and folk dancing
Arts and Crafts
Athletics
Social
Big Brother and Sister
Neighborhood
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The athletic committee supervises the athletics, organizes games, coördinates the afternoon center with the athletic work of the school, arranges for purchase and presentation of trophies, and repairs and supervises athletic meets.

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The neighborhood committee is the largest group and works along the broadest lines. It studies neighborhood conditions, its moral influences, negative and positive; it investigates specific cases of viciousness, of immorality, of poverty, of neglect; it relieves cases of immediate need; keeps in touch with outside agencies, public and private, moral, charitable and religious, coöperating with them in the suppression of nuisances, the relief of needy, the protection of children from immoral, vicious and neglectful tendencies in the home and in the neighborhood. This committee assists in the organization of mothers' clubs and parents' organizations and serves as the vital connecting link between parent, child and teacher, between home, neighborhood and school.

The school committee studies school problems, lateness, truancy, cleanliness of building, decoration of assembly hall, corridors and rooms, takes under its control the school guards, the Pupils' Welfare League, the Penny School Lunch Room, the Sunshine Club, the Tripabout Club, the school magazine, the school savings bank, etc. Questions of method, of organization of phonic mate-

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rial, etc., are taken up for investigation and study.

All these activities, these interests, these broad questions of organization, of administrations, of individual and social improvement, are recognized as *their* problems, *their* activities, *their* interests, *their* field, by pupils, teachers, assistant to the principal, and principal, working hand in hand, in perfect harmony, guided and controlled by the whole-hearted, self-sacrificing, human end of child-hap-

piness—or moral growth, of bodily development and mental efficiency, all depending upon social improvement and school guidance. This represents teacher initiative, individual freedom, school democracy in its broadest sense, because it is based upon the noblest ideals and aspirations of our national democracy, of our religions, and is actuated by the highest motives of child love and social regeneration.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH*

HENRY R LINVILLE,

President, Teachers' League, New York

PERHAPS for the first time in America, an organization of teachers is holding an open meeting tonight to discuss the issue of freedom of speech in a public school system. The implication of the announcement of the subject is naturally that in some way the right of public servants to express their convictions has been called in question. Indeed, the existence of the right of free speech for teachers in the City of New York is now a matter of sufficient doubt to justify a call for enlightenment on the limitations of freedom to express one's convictions on the daily work and the conditions in the public schools. This call for enlightenment which the Teachers' League is now making is one in which the teachers themselves should be allowed to participate with the Board of Education and the public in meeting and in answering. In accordance with the principle that the demands of any group of persons must be considered in relation to the rights of all the people, we shall have to agree first that teachers should show that greater freedom for them would mean gain for the public. In this, as in every other cause which teachers take up in the effort to advance professionally, they

must transpose their aspirations into terms of public welfare.

It must be admitted at the start that the great body of 20,000 teachers in this city is not asking for freedom of speech, or indeed for anything else coherently, except probably the right to have a fair return for their services. So far, no other organization than ours has asked the question that we are asking tonight, and very few are seriously interested in the particular case that has set us to thinking. Therefore, the only professional stimulus to making our inquiry is one that comes naturally to those teachers who think of their teaching, their professional standing, and of all the work the schools are doing, in terms of social welfare. As teachers who desire to take up our problems with this point of view, we must first put for ourselves the task of expressing clearly the amount of freedom of speech we think could reasonably be asked, and second, of stating concretely the nature of the educational situation in this city which might call for public discussion on the part of teachers.

There are teachers and principals among us who maintain that there is no occasion whatever for discussing the limitations of free speech, since *they* have always been able to say what they pleased. I think it goes without saying

* Introductory address at public meeting of the Teachers' League, New York, on the subject of "Freedom of Speech in the Schools," January 22, 1915.

that our problem is not primarily with those who find everything educational to their liking, but rather with those who honestly believe that matters are not altogether satisfactory in the educational system. What is to be done for them in the public interest?

The New York school system of late has given some encouragement to the development of initiative in the ranks of the teachers. This encouragement has been given to potentially thinking men and women. The City Superintendent himself was one of the first to act upon this encouragement in his notable assertion of his right to give information to public organizations about the conduct of the schools. As thinking men and women, the teachers also should accept the encouragement, and proceed to act upon it; for that is the next logical move in the development of democracy in the schools. But if we are to think about our work, to study out its relations to the function of the school as the educational unit, to dwell upon the task of seeing to it that our work is made as effective as possible, to consider the influence of the machinery of the school system in its bearing upon the success of the teachers' work, to go into the matter of our professional standing and our professional ideals as they come back and affect our work with the children, *then we are bound to come into convictions opposed in some measure to current educational practise.*

Up to this point, thinking and holding convictions in greater or less harmony with social progress, is plain sailing. But we must *express* our ideas, and we prefer to express them where the expression will count, altho we have had little experience in the art of expression. We may be ever so honest in our convictions, but we make mistakes in the method of voicing them. We may speak at the wrong time; we may overstress a situation; we may say things that would be clever and effective, if not directed toward the wrong persons. Thru our inexperience in expression, and doubtless thru not a little thoughtlessness in try-

ing to make progress past pitfalls that take the form of by-laws, we find ourselves in trouble. We are fined, transferred, or denied promotion. The natural and unfortunate result of punishment for mistakes in the method of expressing ideas is the creation of a considerable class of teachers who are cynical, bitter, and rebellious toward educational authority and indifferent toward any movement for educational betterment. We ought to be able to prevent this social waste of those who might be useful, as well as to save the younger teachers who are coming on.

If I may make an elementary suggestion, it is that we set for our governing educational bodies ideals of broad social understanding, of clearer vision and a more generous outlook upon the possibilities of liberty of speech, unrestrained except by the developing codes of those who use the liberty. Out of this liberty we should expect to derive ideas for the betterment of the schools and the work they are supposed to be doing, but are not doing. Thru insistence upon the formalism of the method of speech, or upon any other non-essential, we shall surely kill the desire for expression, and possibly also for thinking. The public cannot afford to have either destroyed.

It is but fair to state to what conceivable extent the freedom of speech once guaranteed might carry the thinking of the teachers. In the first place, it might strike at the social wastefulness caused by the long insistence on the point of obedience to superior officers in the bureaucracy, and seek to substitute therefor the democratic principle of coöperation. It might call public attention to the untapped resources of helpfulness among the teachers which the autocratic government by its very nature cannot render available.

The freedom to tell the truth, and not be punished for doing so, might result in the public's learning that the educational system by its organization permits principals to assume the attitude of personal ownership over the school plant,

the children, and the teachers. Under these conditions, the loyalty the principal expects and generally receives is *personal* loyalty. Out of this condition comes the petty tyranny of which we see so much. This also is enormously wasteful, from the point of view of the social purpose of the school.

But I am not persuaded that it would be advisable under the present system of superior and subordinate to grant to teachers the right to speak freely concerning the conditions that surround them in their daily work. Even if those conditions were much less serious than they are, any statement concerning them would almost surely imply unfavorable criticism of a principal. The principal is in possession of effective means of retaliation, for no teacher who has had trouble with his principal can look forward hopefully toward promotion. Furthermore, the harassing of a teacher may continue without legal check until his spirit is broken, for the by-laws do not provide for charges being preferred by a subordinate against a superior. It would be an empty offer to grant freedom of speech to teachers with the injunction that they are to avoid disrespect in its use, for the conditions of petty tyranny and perpetual humiliation from overbearing officers under which many teachers are obliged to work, cannot be spoken of at all in any way that would be considered respectful by the petty tyrants themselves.

The President of the Board of Education may well say that teachers should not be timid protesters in a far corner, but should come forth and exercise the right of initiative, and the public might support the President in this. Yet those who advise do not stand by to observe. If they could see without being seen, they would learn that the grant of freedom of speech under autocracy would create an impossible situation, officially, and a misleading one, for the teachers.

It may be a long time before our point of view in the administration of the schools changes enough to entertain the lesson that might be learned any day

from the way the Swiss manage their schools. Aside from the fact that the schools of Switzerland are among the best in the world, the administration of them is upon a democratic basis. In the Canton of Zurich, two of the seven members of the controlling body called the Educational Council are teachers selected by the whole profession of teachers of the Canton. Teachers are also represented upon the less important educational administrative bodies of the Canton. Thus thru democracy, coöperation is possible, and freedom of speech comes as a matter of course. If the teachers of Switzerland find the conditions under which they work impossible or their officers overbearing, insolent, brutal, or inefficient, they have a voice in changing these conditions or officers for better ones. Nothing could be simpler, but it is important to note that under democracy conditions could never become so bad as those many of us know under autocracy.

Whether we learn this easy lesson now or later, we must grant the active and intelligent interest of all those who are assembled here tonight in bringing about conditions which will permit us and the better and still better teachers than we are, or can be today, to get down as rapidly as possible to the real business of the schools, which is to train the children of the people for efficient and happy living.

JUST BE DECENT

WHEN WE consider that today the teacher is not received with the courtesy due him as a human being it may seem like asking too much to insist on social rights of the child which the teacher himself may not be granted. Two wrongs, however, do not make a right. Even if the teacher is not treated with proper consideration by his superiors he should not on that account transmit a lack of consideration to the children.—FELIX ARNOLD, in *School and Class Management*.

LETTERS ON FREE SPEECH IN THE SCHOOLS*

I believe that everybody is entitled to the right of free speech, and I am under the impression that our Constitution grants this right whether it be with respect to the School System or any other system or Department of Government.

I do not know that any attempt has ever been made on the part of the Board of Education to restrict this right, and I would be one of those who would oppose strenuously any effort on the part of the Board to curtail the privilege.

If this meeting is intended to take up the question of the action of the Board of Education with respect to the discipline of a certain teacher for writing a certain letter, I want to protest most emphatically against the Board being charged with a desire to prohibit Freedom of Speech. That question was not an issue at any time in the determination of the case referred to.

ARTHUR S SOMERS

(Board of Education, New York)

Teachers have a right to discuss, in public or private or by written or oral communications, any subject relating to the schools or to anything else—including the right to criticise actions of the Board of Education or of its officials, *provided* that in so doing they do not make unfounded or injurious aspersions upon the motives or character of the Board or of its officials—I would not say their superiors, because I think a teacher who publicly makes false or malicious statements in regard to the conduct of another teacher of any grade, should be held accountable to the Board therefor. In other words, "free speech" is one thing; malicious libel or slander is another.

Truly yours,

GEO W WINGATE

(Board of Education, New York)

* Sent to the Teachers' League, New York, in response to an invitation to participate in a public meeting on this subject.

I want to say that I am in hearty accord with the purposes of the meeting.

It seems to me that the attempt to bridle the teachers is as harmful to the Board of Education and to the school system as it is to the teachers personally. A really progressive school administration would welcome criticism. Only men who are entirely satisfied with their prejudices and errors resent the expression of views divergent from their own.

Yours very truly,

WM WIRT MILLS

(The Evening Mail, New York)

Teachers in all our schools must stand together in defense of the right of freedom of speech essential to democracy and guaranteed by the Constitution. As Franklin said, if we do not stand together now we shall hang together later, and not only we, but all that is best in our institutions will be strangled. We should follow the President of the United States in the enthusiasm expressed two weeks ago: "There is one thing that I have a great deal of enthusiasm about, I might almost say a reckless enthusiasm, and that is human liberty." Truth, openness, publicity, are the safeguards of free institutions. Light is an excellent disinfectant; what is of more consequence, it is essential to life and growth. "And God said, let there be light; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good."

I have now quoted Benjamin Franklin and the President of the United States, the Constitution and the Bible; I suppose no one except a member of the New York City Board of Education would regard that board as a higher authority.

Sincerely yours,

J MCK CATTELL

(Columbia University)

PUNISHMENT FOR DISLOYALTY

THE FOLLOWING resolution was adopted by the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, October 20, 1914:

Any school employee may be removed by the Board for disloyalty. It shall be considered disloyal to criticize unfavorably, by manner, act, or word, the plans and policies of the schools or the work of any of its school officers, or to discuss the same in a light, trivial, flippant, or "ossipy manner. In general, it shall be considered disloyal to discuss in a derogatory, fault-finding manner, the plans and policies of the schools or the work of any of its employees, except it be in a serious, professional, business conference with some officer of the school, superior in rank to the one making the complaint. This shall in no sense apply to the full and frank and free discussion of matters or topics which may arise for consideration in the regular business and professional meetings of teachers and other officers of the schools.

THE AMERICAN TEACHER has inquired of responsible persons acquainted with the situation at Topeka, and has been furnished with the official resolution given above.

It appears that the resolution was past to meet a situation brot about by two or three teachers who felt that they had been discriminated against. The campaign of criticism reached a point where in the belief of the Board permitted continuation would have been demoralizing in its effects, if not on the teaching force, at least on the student body.

We are not informed as to the exact nature of the charges made by the teachers, nor whether any professional ideal lay at the bottom of their fight. However, it is admitted by professional authorities in a position to measure the effect of the resolution that the Board made a serious tactical blunder. At the same time, it is maintained that the provocation was great, and that the rule really is the product of a spirit of forbearance and leniency, rather than of arbitrariness on the part of the Board.

It may be worthy of consideration by the people of Topeka that a natural comment on such a rule made in a state that had its birth in the struggle for freedom is to this effect: "How could such a

think happen in Kansas?" It does not sound like the spirit of the West. But one must remember that all sorts of people are to be found anywhere.

In the best of communities, it is possible for a body representing the community to betray a spirit of inanity while believing that it is acting with forbearance. What could be more ridiculous than the proclamation that any teacher should be dismissed from the service who criticizes unfavorably, by *manner, act, or word*, the plans and policies of the schools? We cannot resist the temptation to inquire whether it would be wise for a teacher to enter Board of Education headquarters with a frown on his face, or for a teacher with a constitutional tilt of the nose to pass nearer than one block. Anything less than the kindergarten smile of loveliness might be interpreted under the category of criticizing unfavorably "by manner."

Moreover, a handful of teachers complaining because they had been discriminated against would seem to be an insufficient excuse for the promulgation of any kind of a formal rule by so responsible a body. Should we not expect public bodies to have a more appropriate sense of their importance as representatives of the community? And what of poise?

We are inclined to think that the remedy we have suggested in other cases of conflict between individual teachers and boards of education would have been effective in the Topeka trouble. The cases could have been submitted publicly to the consideration of a few representative teachers' organizations. Their judgment would have been helpful. And besides, the occasion would have been an inspiration to the teachers themselves.

Have you any enthusiasm left at the close of the day? Use some of it to advance the interests of your profession.

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This paper seeks to advance the status of the teacher to the dignity and the influence of a profession, by advocating high standards of admission to the calling; by urging an extension of the opportunities for the participation of teachers in the direction of educational affairs; and by supporting the organization of teachers for all legitimate professional purposes.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

THE TEACHERS' LEAGUE of New York City on January 22, 1915, held a remarkable open meeting on the subject of Freedom of Speech. Altho the immediate stimulus to the preparation of the plans for the meeting was the case of Henrietta Rodman, of the Wadleigh High School, New York, referred to in the January number of THE AMERICAN TEACHER, the formal speeches developed in an entirely adequate fashion the fundamental principles

upon which freedom of speech must be justified. Effective as were most of the speeches, the really dramatic portion of the meeting consisted of the inspired and inspiring informal discussion that followed the formal addresses.

With one or two exceptions, the informal discussion was carried on by teachers in the elementary and high schools of New York City. Those who are familiar with the condition of mental thralldom in which the teachers of New York have existed long before the system "was freed from politics," will have the necessary understanding to appreciate what would happen in the minds of teachers still intelligent tho suppressed, and still watchful tho cowed, when suddenly the sharp-edged swords of champions had cut away the sham and pretense of free speech with discretion or free speech with respectful demeanor. The last defense of autocracy swept away, the unfortunate defenders of the dying faith fared badly, in the face of the rising wrath and confidence of the oppressed. What the teachers said we are not able to reproduce; it was the way they broke loose that counted.

THE THREAT ADMINISTRATIVE

AT A RECENT teachers' meeting in one of the New York City high schools, the chairman of one of the committees on school organization, in his eagerness to secure prompt reports from his fellow teachers, declared that he would report to the principal any teacher who failed to send in returns at the time set. One of the teachers took exception to this announcement, making the observation that threatening is quite an unprofessional method for securing coöperation. The other teachers expressed their approval of this sentiment by loud applause. We hope that they all get their reports in on time.

Democracy needs leaders who are bigger than their personal grouch, more clever than their opponents, and wiser and more tolerant than their official superiors.

MOTHERHOOD AND THE STATE

THOSE WHO HAVE in the past opposed the retention of mothers as teachers out of sheer stupidity, or out of mental inertia, or moral cowardice will no doubt be shocked by the decision of Commissioner Finley. But they will gradually adjust themselves to the new point of view. At any rate, we do not need to bother with them any longer. The case is closed, so far as they are concerned.

But there have been those who opposed the retention of the mother in the class room on the ground that it is contrary to social policy to permit mothers to do anything at all outside the home while their children need their services and attention. Now that the case has been settled in what they believe to be an anti-social way, they should at once undertake a propaganda for educating the public to their point of view. In this *THE AMERICAN TEACHER* will be glad to assist. We might begin by supporting all well-planned legislation for widows' pensions, for motherhood subsidies, for the prohibition of woman's work under conditions injurious to motherhood or to childhood. We might borrow the legislation said to have been adopted in Germany during the present war, on the subject of motherhood and the next generation. According to reports, the measure in question provides that the expenses of childbirth and of nursing incident thereto be borne by the public treasury, that the mother receive all her support for eight weeks after child-birth, and for twelve weeks if she nurses the child herself.

This is a frank recognition of the dependence of motherhood, and an equally frank assumption by society of the responsibility for relieving mothers of the burden. This has nothing to do with opportunity to serve, or with "holding jobs." When the molders of policies are ready to protect the defenseless and to assist those who need aid we shall be with them.

PRACTICAL HELP FOR THE TIMID

INCIDENT TO the reorganization of school work at the beginning of the Spring term in the New York schools, a teacher felt that she had been treated unjustly by being given a very heavy program. Officially, she would be expected to state her case to the principal, who was indirectly responsible for the assignment. This she did not want to do because she believed she would be treated rudely—and she would have been. And yet, she did not want to take her case to the superintendent of her district, for she was afraid he would reprimand her for going over the head of her principal.

The advice she received from one of the staff of *THE AMERICAN TEACHER* was to state her case to the superintendent, and to tell him frankly, before he asked, why she was afraid to speak to the principal. The superintendent happens to be a gentleman. Would you have followed the same course, if he had been something else? Say "Yes." Now, why?

A NEW YORK high school principal said recently that he accepted it as natural and inevitable that the principal of a school should be regarded as an enemy by pupils and by teachers. It would be worth while to know how other principals look upon this suggestion. If being regarded an enemy is natural, it may be desirable. If desirable, how can we promote the relation?

PUT THE BARS A FEW PEGS HIGHER

(A real letter from a real physician in New York City)

To the teacher

Louis S— is a very sensible child that catches very easy a cold by bathing, while bathing at home he is taking the greatest care and put right to bed which cannot be done while bathing in school. Therefore I will kindly ask you to dispense him from bathing in school.

JOHN BLACK.

ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS

THE MEETING called for the purpose of organizing this association was held in the auditorium of the Chemists' Club, New York City, on the afternoon and evening of Friday, January 1, and the morning of January 2, 1915. Over 250 were in attendance in the course of the three sessions. Professor John Dewey, of Columbia University, called the meeting to order and delivered an introductory address upon the purpose and possibilities of such an association, as conceived by the committee on organization, of which he had served as chairman.

We quote from Professor Dewey's address:

But have we not come to a time when more can be achieved by taking thought together? In the future, as in the past, progress will depend upon local efforts in response to local needs and resources. We have the advantages as well as the disadvantages of the lack of the European system of centralized control. So much the more reason for the existence of a central body of teachers, which, lacking official and administrative power, will express the opinion of the profession where it exists and foster its formation where it does not exist. I am a great believer in the power of public opinion. In this country nothing stands against it. But to act, it must exist. To act wisely, it must be intelligently formed. To be intelligently formed, it must be the result of deliberate inquiry and discussion. It can not be developed in corners here and there; it can not be the voice of a few, however wise. It must be formed democratically; that is, coöperatively. All interests, however humble, must be heard; inquiry and conference must glean all the experiences available; decision must be based upon mutual consultation.

TEACHING SCHOOL and college boys to understand and appreciate Mexicans, Canadians, Japanese, South Americans, and Germans is considerably more important than teaching them to shoot. Teaching them to respect the rights, the views, and even the psychology, of others will bear a better harvest than any instruction in military tactics.—EDWARD T DEVINE, in *The Survey*, January 2, 1915.

MOTHERHOOD AND THE PROFESSION

THE Commissioner of Education of the State of New York has given us cause for congratulation, for he has upheld the principle that the business of teaching must be given an opportunity to develop professional standards. He has said that teaching must no longer be looked upon as a convenient pastime for respectable but indigent young females awaiting the call to matrimony. He has said that acceptable service in this vocation is a matter of zeal and devotion and efficiency, and not a matter of economic need, or of evading the corollaries of marriage. He did not say all this in just that way; but he said something just as good, and he said it better, in his decision in the case of Mrs. Bridget C. Peixotto, who was dismissed from the schools of New York City for being absent from school on account of the birth of her child, "without permission of the Board of Education."

The text of the decision is as follows:

As commissioner I would give every possible aid in my power to promote devotion to duty, zealous service and efficiency on the part of the teachers of the state, to prevent neglect of duty and inefficiency and to eliminate incompetence; and I attribute only such high purposes to the Board of Education in its action in this case. But I am of the clear opinion, which I am obliged to follow, that these ends and purposes will not be served by selecting, or seeming to select, for stigma or reproach such a reason for temporary absence from school duty as is offered in this case, or inferring, or seeming to infer, inefficiency from the mere fact of motherhood.

If, as this honorable board appears to hold, married women teachers should *ipso facto* end their service upon maternity, this policy (which I can not believe sound in principle or wholesome in practise) can be made possible only thru legislation, making it lawful to discharge, because of marriage, a teacher in service. Meanwhile it is the duty of the board to adopt a practise in accord with the clear intent of existing law and in harmony with this decision.

Mrs. Peixotto was absent from her position because of illness attending motherhood and such absence was the basis of the charges against her. She was found guilty of neglect of duty and dismissed from the service. Such neglect of duty therefore consists of her absence from her school for the purpose of motherhood, and she was dismissed for such cause.

The charges preferred against Mrs. Peixotto can fall under none of the four specific causes for dismissal named in the charter except that of neglect of duty. No question has been raised as to her misconduct or inefficiency, nor is it anywhere indicated that she was guilty of insubordination. It is also clear that the dismissal of a teacher may not be based upon any other cause than those specified in the charter.

As asserted by the counsel for the board, it may be that absence for the purpose of bearing a child is not absence for "serious personal illness," within section 44, subdivision 4, of the by-laws and therefore excusable "with pay." But such absence clearly falls within subdivision 4 of such section, which authorized excuses of absences "without pay," with no restriction as to the cause thereof, except as to special absences described in subdivision 3A.

The fact of her absence for the purpose of motherhood was deemed by the district superintendent as sufficient to justify charges of neglect of duty against her. It was apparently the purpose of the board and its officers to adopt the policy of dismissing from the service all married women teachers who absented themselves from their positions because of childbirth and to classify such absences as inexcusable.

There is no statutory prohibition of the employment of a married woman as a teacher in the public schools of the city of New York, nor so far as the record shows is there any by-law or regulation of the board which forbids such employment.

As to the continuance in the schools of a teacher who marries after entering the service, it has been decided by the Court of Appeals in the Murphy case that marriage may not, in itself, be made ground for dismissal.

But this appeal carries the question of the status of the married women teachers in the City of New York one step beyond this determination of the court. Married women teachers under the rules and practises of the board may be and are employed. Women teachers under the decision of the Court of Appeals may not be dismissed on account of marriage after entering the service.

The question now asked is: May the board dismiss a married woman teacher for that which is the lawful, natural consequence of marriage and its social sanction? Such answer as the highest court gives to this question on its legal merits is to be found in the following quotation from the dissenting opinion of the Chief Justice of the Court of Appeals in this very case:

The question which we are called upon to decide is whether the specific accusation upon which the relator has been dismissed from her position, to wit: "Absence for the purpose of bearing a child," constitutes the neglect of duty. I agree with the learned Judge who heard the case at Special Term (Justice Seabury) that it does not.

This opinion, concurred in by Justice Hogan, serves not only to define clearly the issue before the Commissioner of Education, as stated above, but also to give advice of greatest weight and of highest source as to the import of the laws of the state touching the merits of this controversy.

Without undertaking to determine or to define here the limits of the board's discretion (and it is and has been the general policy of this department to assure the widest discretion practicable) and without discussing here the advantages and disadvantages of the policy of employing married teachers or estimating their relative efficiency (since such rehearsal would not touch directly the matter at issue) I present the conclusion to which I am compelled, after careful and thoro examination of all the papers in the case, that the board should have accepted the natural corollary of its policy, voluntary or enforced, of employing or retaining married women teachers and should have given at least as favorable consideration to an absence for motherhood as is normally given to absences asked for reasons of personal convenience.

NOT A PROFESSION—IV**BETRAYING A TRUST**

SOME TWO or three years ago, a large city became aware of its chronic penury and decided, thru its official agents, to retrench its expenditures by eliminating from the annual budget the items covering the pay of shop-teachers for after-school classes. It happened, however, that the demand for shop work had in the meanwhile grown to large proportions, and a practical solution was found by employing the simple expedient of officially "assigning" the regular shop teachers to work after school hours—without additional compensation. (For, you see, there was no money to be had for additional compensation.) For a year the shop teachers—at we know not what sacrifice—nobly stuck to their posts and did the regular work, plus the extra work, for the pay previously allowed for the regular work done.

In this the shop teachers may seem to have exhibited the spirit of devotion to service, the soldierly virtue of doing what needed to be done without thought of compensation, or at any rate without insistence upon compensation. But subsequent events lend color to the suspicion that they stuck to their posts because they were afraid to do otherwise.

Several lines of conduct lay before them. They could continue indefinitely doing extra work without pay, and gradually establish new forms of "trade customs" for themselves and for their colleagues in other departments. Or each could individually protest against doing the extra work, and assume the risk of whatever penalty may attach to the making of such protests. Or they could collectively make a dignified protest with specific demands or refusals—that is, they could collectively refuse to continue to work under the conditions imposed, after giving due notice. This would be very much like threatening to strike, and this is the very thing that they most feared to do. So they adopted the very last resource of desperate impotence.

They pretended to continue at their

posts, conducting shop classes after school hours; they retained their jobs; they did not break with the authorities. But they devised a hundred cunning ways of discouraging the pupils. They stultified themselves by imposing upon the boys conditions of work that made the shops decidedly unattractive places for afternoons indoors. And they at last succeeded so well that the after-school classes were officially discontinued for lack of patronage.

As teachers and as citizens these teachers did thus a wicked thing as well as a foolish thing. It was wicked because the children who came to the shops were entitled to the best that the equipment and the teachers could yield. Whatever grievance the overworked or the underpaid or the otherwise abused teacher may feel is not a grievance against the children, and the children should not be penalized for the imposition upon the teachers. Far better would it have been to refuse to man the shops than to deal dishonestly with the boys.

And the device was foolish because it acted injuriously to the teachers themselves. By treating the pupils as they did they not only drove away the extra work; they also discredited—for the time being—all shop work. It was to the interests of the shop teachers to increase the demand for their services to the point where appreciation would have forced increased compensation. They succeeded not only in closing the after-school shops; they succeeded also in reducing the demand for more shops.

In addition to all this, however, they demeaned themselves to the level of the hopeless plodders who have no voice and no resource but destruction. In this they disgraced their occupation; and this is the unpardonable sin.

In deploring and in denouncing a group of teachers for their unprofessional conduct, we must recognize that there is another side to the situation. This is not said in mitigation of what the teachers did; for there is no mitigation. But it is necessary to call atten-

tion to the fact that the issue was forced upon the teachers by a group of men from whom we are commonly accustomed to expect bigger things. Members of boards of education, superintendents, municipal authorities—these are people of larger experience and more than average ability; at least, so we are taught to believe. It is upon these men that the onus of the disgraceful situation falls. It is these men who blow hot and cold, according to circumstances, but who profess to be shocked when others exhibit flexibility in their moral codes.

The duplicity of business men controlling public affairs has become so common that we accept it without question as an exhibition of high ability, or even of "statesmanship." In this particular connection it takes this form: Facing the "taxpayer" our administrators assume the attitude of dealing with all public problems from a "business" standpoint, which means buying goods and services at the lowest market price.

Facing the teachers or the street-cleaners, however, our statesmen sing a different song. They speak of loyalty to the city and devotion to the service and public welfare. They do not say cent for cent; they appear to be shocked when public employes seek to reduce their expenditures of time and energy to the lowest point *per dollar* of wage. They denounce such conduct as eminently unpatriotic and even dishonorable. In other words they insist (for the edification of taxpayer and voter) upon using the most brutal elements in our commercial life in their treatment of public employes; while they demand of these employes the most lofty idealism in public service.

The answer to this dilemma is to be found in getting teachers (or other public servants) who are prepared to adopt the professional attitude towards their work; and in getting administrators who are prepared—by character and training and experience—to deal with public employes in a modern, human and sincere manner.

BOOK NOTES

ONE OF THE causes of the retardation of educational progress, says Hollister (*The Administration of Education in a Democracy*, Scribner's), is the difficulty with which the full significance of democracy in education is grasped by the popular mind. He cites as an illustration the parsimonious attitude of the average taxpayer towards school appropriations, while at the same time loudly accusing the schools of incompetency. He forgets to take note of the difficulty experienced by School Boards and Superintendents in grasping the full significance of democracy in education.

This book is the result of the author's thirty years of experience as teacher and supervisor and so he is able to discuss every possible phase in the field of educational administration from a practical standpoint. He points out the necessity for industrial education and shows how little provision we had made therefore up to 1910. Then there were only 82 Manual Training and Industrial schools of high school grade, to 10,313 academic schools. Much of the training of these schools was "not of a kind calculated to aid in acquiring skill of a definite and well organized character."

Some of the essentials of educational progress in the future, he says, are "thorough and continuous study of the present and changing social needs, both local and national, as related to our system of public education, and also the freeing of 11 educational experts from political influence in their appointment."

There are some interesting things about supervision in a democracy. Many will be surprised to learn that in a democracy supervisors will make teachers better by (a) sympathetic assistance and counsel; (b) constructive criticism; (c) bringing to their attention the latest thing in education and by encouraging them to blaze new paths of educational procedure. He favors the highest possible degree of freedom and initiative on the part of teacher, principal and supervisor. In Germany, he says, little expert supervision is called for. "Teachers are approved by the Government and so are considered competent to direct the work of their schools in ac-

cordance with the prescribed courses."

Those who are looking for a real program of democracy in education will perhaps be disappointed. He defines an ideal school board as one consisting of no more than seven members, serving without pay, and elected by the people. There is no mention of teachers being represented on the board nor is any provision made whereby teachers might be consulted in the solution of educational problems. Neither is there any mention of the participation of teachers in the administration of education in a democracy. It is evidently not the democracy we are looking for.

The author's sense of social responsibility does not seem to be highly developed. Realizing that "conditions in the home or industry may prevent the child from going to school," the only remedy he proposes is the adequate enforcement of attendance laws. This method of overcoming the conditions of the home and industry that interfere with the child's presence at school is not very far-sighted.

The Macmillan Company has reissued the first part of McKeever's *The Training of the Girl* as a separate little volume under the title *The Industrial Training of the Girl*. The democratic spirit that pervades all of Professor McKeever's writings and the well selected references makes this book helpful; but it cannot be said to be a "practical" book in the ordinary sense. (New York, 1914; 50c.)

What They Say

To the Editors, THE AMERICAN TEACHER:

Recently it was my privilege to visit two well-known schools in a neighboring state. In both schools I was strongly impressed with one fact. It was that the value of experience was recognized.

In one school the principal is an old man. He has given the best years of his life to actual work in the classroom and has an established reputation as a teacher. Now an assistant relieves him of much of the detail work incident to the office, while the school

reaps the benefit of his ripe experience, kindly supervision, and clear, far-sighted policy.

In the other school is a wife and mother who, side by side with her husband, has labored for years, not only to teach physical training, but also to develop the strongest and best qualities in her students. It was an inspiration to talk with her. Her influence upon the girls is little short of wonderful. It reaches far beyond the walls of the school, out into the lives and homes of those who have been privileged to be under her care. The school is to be congratulated on being able to retain the services of a woman pre-eminently fitted to deal with young girls on the most vital of questions.

Recently in one of our large cities, a teacher of experience wished to take the examination for physical training in the high schools. She was told very frankly that she was too old, as the director of physical training desired "young teachers who could dance." Indeed, the requirements have been lowered to make it easier for these young teachers to become eligible. Contrast the moral effect of the earnest teaching of a mother of large experience and that of a young woman to whom dancing appeals as the most interesting phase of physical training work, as well as being one of the easiest to teach!

Do not these examples of the recognition of experience represent a concrete principle? The older a person grows the more experienced he becomes. Would any one expect a young physician fresh from college to be able to deal with disease as efficiently as an older man? The students themselves are quick to recognize this when they anxiously await an appointment on a hospital staff, principally for the experience.

Is it not a mistake then to crowd out the older teachers even if they are physically unfit to compete with the younger? Would not the schools gain by retaining on the staff the older men and women and by expecting them to guide and direct the younger? Were a decrease to be made in the amount of work demanded and in the hours assigned, doubtless many teachers of successful experience would be glad to accept a corresponding decrease in salary.

A. G. JACOB.

Queens, L. I.

A VOICE FROM MINNEAPOLIS

A STEP FORWARD in democratizing the public schools of the country is the growing tendency of cities to organize Teachers' Councils. In no case has the council failed to be its own best excuse for being; and the improvement in organization shown in the newer councils is evidence that the teachers of the country are awake, and observing something of what is going on around them.

Plans for the organization of a Public School Educational Council were submitted to the teachers of Minneapolis early last month. It is interesting to note the evolution of the "Proposals." A Coöperating Committee met in Conference with the Superintendent of Schools, *at his invitation*, and together they worked out the idea of the Educational Council. This democratic method of organization is further exemplified in the body of the "Proposals." Just as a matter of comparison, let us look at the Teachers' Council of the City of New York, then at the Educational Council of Minneapolis. What can we learn from the comparison?

NEW YORK

I Function

1. The furnishing of information and the opinions of the teaching staff (principals and teachers) upon questions submitted by the Board of Education or by the Board of Superintendents.

2. The introduction of recommendations concerning any of the problems affecting the welfare of the schools and the teaching staff.

3. All final decisions shall be left to the Board of Education or the Board of Superintendents.

II Membership

The Teachers' Council shall be composed of 45 representatives from *such voluntary teachers' organizations* as were in existence March, 1913, and of such other teachers' organizations as may thereafter be recognized by the Board of Education.

III Election of Members

The *delegates* of the voluntary teachers' organizations shall meet in joint conference on the second Thursday of November in each year, at a place designated by the President of the Board of Education, and there proceed to the election of members of the Council.

Elections shall be by ballot.

MINNEAPOLIS

I Function

The Educational Council shall have for its purpose conferences *with* the Superintendent of Schools upon matters concerning the practical operation of the city schools.

All recommendations of the Educational Council shall be filed with the Board of Education.

II Membership

This organization shall consist of three grade teachers and one high school teacher from each of the [four] high school districts; two grade principals; one high school principal; two representatives of the supervisors and teachers of special subjects.

III Election of Members

Yearly, the third week of September, the *Superintendent of Schools* shall cause the *teachers of the city* to assemble for the purpose of electing the members of the Educational Council.

Elections shall be by ballot.